

That thilke wombe in which youre children leye
Sholde, biforn the peple, in my walkyng,
Be seyn al bare; wherfore I yow preye,
Lat me nat lyk a worm go by the weye:
Remembre yow, myn owene lord so deere,
I was youre wyf, though I unworthy weere.

Wherfore, in guerdon of my maydenhede,
Which that I broghte, and noght agayn I bere,
As voucheth sauf to yeve me, to my meede,
But swich a smok as I was wont to were,
That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here
That was youre wyf; and heer take I my leewe
Of yow, myn owene lord, lest I yow greve.

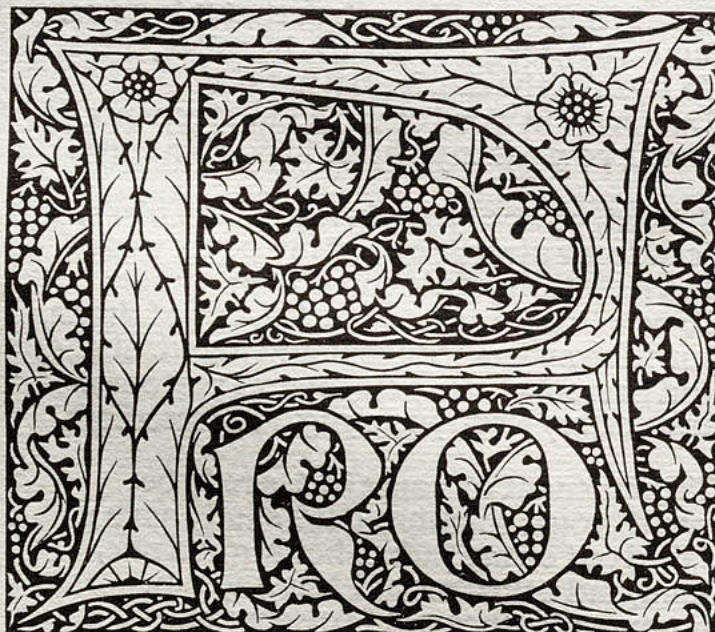
THE smok, quod he, that thou hast on
thy bak,
Lat it be stille, and bere it forth with
thee.

But wel unnethes thilke word he spak,
But wente his wey for routhe and for pitee.
Biforn the folk hirselves strepeth she,
And in hir smok, with heed and foot al bare,
Toward hir fader hous forth is she fare.

THE folk hire folwe wepyng in hir weye,
And fortune ay they cursen as they
goon;

But she fro wepyng kepthe hire eyen dreye,
Ne in this tyme word ne spak she noon.
Hir fader, that this tidyinge herde anon,
Curseth the day and tyme that nature
Shoop hym to been a lyves creature.

for out of doute this olde povre man
Was evere in suspect of hir mariage;
for evere he demed, sith that it bigan,
That whan the lord fulfild hadde his corage,



POLOIGNE IS THIS ERL OF DANYK
COME,
Of which the fame up sprang to moore and
lesse,
And in the peples eres alle and some

hym wolde thynke it were a disparage
To his estat so lowe for talighte,
And voyden hire as soone as ever he myghte.

AGHYNS his doghter hastiliche goth he
for he by noyse of folk knew hire
comynge,
And with hire olde coote, as it myghte be,
He covered hire, ful sorwefully wepyng;
But on hire body myghte he it nat bryng,
for rude was the clooth, and moore of age
By dayes fele than at hire mariage.

Thus with hire fader, for a certeyn space,
Dwellethe this flour of wyfly pacience,
That neither by hire wordes ne hire face
Biforn the folk, ne eek in hire absence,
Ne shewed she that hire was doon offence;
Ne of hire heighe estat no remembrance
Ne hadde she, as by hire contenance.

No wonder is, for in hire grete estat
Hire goost was evere in pleyyn humyltee;
No tendre mouth, noon herte delicat,
No pompe, no semblant of roialtee;
But ful of pacient benygnytee,
Discreet and pridelees, ay honorable,
And to hire housbonde evere meke & stable.

Men speke of Job, and moost for his hum-
blesse,
As clerkes, whan hem list, konne wel endite,
Namely of men, but as in soothfastnesse,
Though clerkes preise wommen but a lite,
Ther kan no man in humblesse hym acquite
As womman kan, ne kan been half so trewe
As wommen been, but it be falle of newe.

Explicit quinta pars. Sequitur pars sexta.

Was kouth eek, that a newe markysesse
He with hym broghte, in swich pompe and
richesse,
That nevere was ther seyn with mannes eye
So noble array in al West Lumbardye.

The markys, which that shoop and knew al
this,
Er that this erl was come, sente his message
for thilke sely povre Grisildis;
And she with humble herte and glad visage,
Nat with no swollen thought in hire corage,
Cam at his heste, and on hire knees hire
sette,
And reverently and wisely she hym grette.

GRISILDE, quod he, my wyl is outrely
This mayden that shal wedded been
to me,
Received be to morwe as roially
As it possible is in myn hous to be,
And eek that every wight in his degree
Have his estat in sittynge and servyse
And heigh plesauce, as I kan best devyse.



I have no wommen suffisaunt certayn
The chambres for tarraye in ordinaunce
After my lust, and therefore wolde I fayn
That thyn were al swich manere governaunce;
Thou knowest eek of old al my plesauce;
Thogh thyn array be badde and yvel biseye,
Do thou thy devoir at the leeste weye.

NOT oonly, lord, that I am glad, quod she,
To doon youre lust, but I desire also
Yow for to serve and plesse in my degree
Withouthen feynting, and shal everemo;
Ne nevere, for no wele ne no wo,
Ne shal the goost withinne myn herte stente
To love yow best with al my trewe entente.

And with that word she gan the hous to
dighte,
And tables for to sette and beddes make;
And peyned hire to doon al that she myghte,
Preyinge the chambereres for Goddes sake
To hasten hem, and faste swepe and shake;
And she, the mooste servysable of alle,
Hath every chambre arrayed and his halle.

ABOUTEN undren gan this erl alighte,
That with him broghte thise noble
children tweye,
for which the peple ran to seen the sighte

Of hire array, so richely biseye;
And thanne at erst amonges hem they seye,
That Walter was no fool, thogh that hym leste
To chaunge his wyf, for it was for the beste.

for she is fairer, as they deemen alle,
Than is Grisilde, and moore tendre of age,
And fairer fruyt bitwene hem sholde falle,
And moore plesant, for hire heigh tynage;
Hir brother eek so faire was of visage,
That hem to seen the peple hath caught
plesauce,
Commendinge now the markys governaunce.

Huctor

STORMY peple! unsad and
evere untrewel!
Ay undiscreet and chaungyng
as a vane,
Delityng evere in rumbul that
is newe,

for lyk the moone ay waxe ye and wane;
Ay ful of clapping, deere ynogh a jane;
Youre doom is fals, youre constance yvele
preeveth,

A ful greet fool is he that on yow leeveth!

Thus seyden sadde folk in that citee
Whan that the peple gazed up and down,